

Grade 6 SS/ELA  
Unit 2: River Valley Civilizations

**Lesson 2: Geography of the Fertile Crescent**

**Overview:**

This is an introduction to the geography of the Fertile Crescent. Different forms of media such as pictures, videos and maps will be used to show how geography has affected the development of civilization in the region.

***Suggested time allowance:*** 1 class period

**Standards:**

- SS.2.1: The study of world history requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions of people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives.
- SS.3.1: Geography can be divided into six essential elements which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography.
- RH.6.7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- WHST.6.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Enduring Understanding:**

- Geography impacts the development of civilizations

**Essential Unit Question:**

- How did the geography of the Fertile Crescent affect the development of early civilization in that region?

**Resources/Materials for this lesson:**

- Blank Outline Map of the Fertile Crescent (included)
- SMART Board Activity (included)
- Google Maps. <http://maps.google.com/>
- Colored Terrain Map of the Fertile Crescent (included)
- Colored pencils
- “Mesopotamian Geography and Sumerian Society” (1:08) and Agricultural Technology” (1:06). April 3, 2011. Discovery Education Streaming. Subscription required.  
<http://player.discoveryeducation.com/index.cfm?guidAssetId=C97E7036-9246-4258->

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“The fertile valley between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers provided an ideal location for the Sumerians to grow their own grain, vegetables, and fruit, and to raise livestock for meat and dairy products. The Sumerians protected their fields from flooding by building a system of levees along the riverbanks. They also developed an irrigation system to bring river water into their fields during periods of drought.”

**Activities/Procedures:**

**Day 1**

1. Project the SMART Board Activity file (included) for the Do Now. What does the word “fertile” mean? What does the word “crescent” mean? Together, what do you predict term “Fertile Crescent” means?
2. Discuss the Do Now and give students the formal definition of the words above, after students have the opportunity to postulate their own.
3. Using Google Maps show the students where the Fertile Crescent is. Use the terrain map (included) to show them the geography in detail.
4. Distribute the Blank Map of the Fertile Crescent. (included) Project SMART Board Activity slide 3 or provide any map of the Fertile Crescent that is available. Have the students label and color a blank map of the region with the following features:
  - compass rose
  - key with icons for the geographic features
  - Fertile Crescent shaded
  - rivers labeled
  - bodies of water
  - label 3 cities with clear connection to water sources: Babylon
5. Ask students, “How did ancient Mesopotamian farmers use technology to control their water supply?” and “How did the geographic features of Mesopotamia influence the development of civilization in the region?” Have student view “Mesopotamian Geography” and “Agricultural Technology.”  
<http://player.discoveryeducation.com/index.cfm?guidAssetId=C97E7036-9246-4258-B1F6-9586F5E1333B&blnFromSearch=1&productcode=US> and take notes to answer the two questions.
6. For homework, students will use their notes to answer the two questions addressed by the video clips.

**Evaluation/Assessment:**

- Map of the Fertile Crescent

**Vocabulary** (See Unit Glossary for definitions)

- |            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| • canal    | • flooding   |
| • crescent | • irrigation |
| • drought  | • levees     |
| • fertile  | • silt       |